



**Alberta
Cattle
Commission**

Call Us At
(403) 275-4400

GRASS

ROUTES



The Alberta cattle producer newsletter.

Inside

2

*Logging On
Private Lands*

3

*Provincial Lobby
Efforts*

4

*Few Water
Conservation and
Management Act*

5

*Controlling
Criminomoniasis*

6

CA & CANFAX

Did you know?

Research shows that 15 to 20 per cent of AAA beef carcasses are unpalatable to consumers even with optimal marbling, aging and electrical stimulation (palatability includes taste, juiciness and tenderness).



Industry launches nutrition program

"Matter of Fat" has all the facts straight for consumers

High fat intake is the number one concern among nutritionists in North America. According to Agriculture Canada, the average Canadian consumes more than 100 pounds of fat per year.

A large portion of fats in the diet are "hidden fats" which are added during food processing and preparation. These include fats from salad dressings, gravies and margarine.

To help consumers identify hidden fats, a nutrition education kit with visuals and activities has been produced by the **Beef Information Centre**, the *Canadian Pork Council*, the *Canadian Meat Council* and reviewed by the *National Institute of Nutrition*.

Called **A Matter of Fat**, the kit is designed to make it easier for nutrition educa-

tors, health professionals and doctors to help people identify the sources of fat in their diet. It has been reviewed by therapeutic and consulting dietitians, as well as dietitians from Agriculture Canada.

Elements in the kit include:

- visuals, activities and suggestions to help make lower-fat food choices from all food groups,
- a nutrition reference sheet to help determine portion sizes and fat grams in food,
- a colorful poster, and
- a consumer booklet.

The program was just recently launched nationally with news conferences in major cities in seven provinces. Initial response has been very favorable - watch for further updates.

Economic realities catch up to the Crow Benefit

The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) is pleased that the export subsidy on grains and oilseeds contained in the Western Grain Transportation Act (WGTA) was eliminated in the federal budget.

However, the ACC believes that Alberta is being disadvantaged by the exclusion of forage acres from the WGTA buy-out pro-

posal. Provincial allocations are being based on 1994 rail shipments rather than arable acres. This decision penalizes producers for diversifying their operations by producing livestock feed instead of relying on the export grain market.

The ACC will lobby the provincial and federal governments to have these problems corrected.

Strength from the ground up.

Canada Winter Games beef promotion

To coincide with the 1995 Canada Winter Games, the Beef Education Association and Alberta Cattle Commission conducted a restaurant and shopping mall promotion in Grande Prairie, Hinton and Jasper. Several thousand people traveled to those areas and it was a good opportunity to reach athletes and tourists from Alberta and across the country. Twenty restaurants in the three towns featured beef promotional materials and producer volunteers served beef taco nuggets in a busy Grande Prairie mall during the games. Much of the restaurant beef promotional materials will continue to be used indefinitely after the games conclude.



Logging and private property rights

The provincial government has formed a ministerial task force to determine ways to oversee logging on private lands. The premier formed the task force after receiving considerable public pressure to stop uncontrolled harvesting of privately owned forests in Alberta.

Alberta timber exports to British Columbia have risen dramatically the past year as B.C. mills aggressively seek Alberta timber due to high world market prices and declining annual allowable cuts in their home province.

The government task force will consider regulation or legislation to control logging practices on private land which could eventually affect other uses of private land including agriculture.

The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) is in favor of protecting the private property rights of land owners.

Larry Helland, vice-chairman of the ACC says, "It is fundamental to private property rights that producers be able to sell their beef, grain or timber to the highest bidder. Any regulations that limit private property rights would be a regressive step for Alberta."

The ACC also recognizes that with rights come responsibilities. There are regulations already in place to minimize the environmental impact of logging on private lands.

As the owners of large tracks of land, producers' land use practices will continue to be under close scrutiny. Producers need to ensure they take good care of the resources under their control.

Producers wishing to express their opinion to the task force can do so by contacting Environmental Protection Minister Ty Lund at 323, 10800 - 97 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2B6, (403) 427-2391.

Livestock investigator has successful first year

Alberta's RCMP Livestock Investigator Cpl. Emil Smetaniuk (outside left photo) has just completed his first year on the job. He acts as a resource and liaison officer to help local RCMP detachments and provincial brand inspectors deal with livestock theft.

So far Cpl. Smetaniuk has been very pleased with the reception he has received from producers, especially from Rural Crime Watch organizations across the province.

In his second year, Cpl. Smetaniuk plans to continue to meet with interested groups and individuals to stress the importance of crime prevention and to develop a training course on livestock investigation for RCMP officers.

In 1994, brand inspection records show that 1,041 head of cattle were reported missing. Cpl. Smetaniuk estimates that only half of the cattle actually missing were ever reported. To report missing cattle call your

local brand inspector or local police or RCMP detachment to file an official report. Reports are then relayed to the brand inspection office and Cpl. Smetaniuk who liaises with local investigative officers. Last year more than 10 charges were laid.

With calving season here Cpl. Smetaniuk recommends the following steps to prevent theft:

- check newborn calves frequently and mark them as soon as possible,
- choose a calving site away from public access,
- permanently identify both cows and calves,
- make sure you have an accurate inventory when you turn cattle out, and
- look for evidence of theft such as cut fences, strange tracks or other suspicious activities and report them.

If you have any questions call Cpl. Smetaniuk at (403) 291-6200.



Provincial lobby efforts ongoing

The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) provincial affairs committee develops and recommends policy on a broad range of provincial legislative and regulatory issues. Some of the current issues the committee is working on are:

Water Conservation and Management Act

The ACC along with other agricultural groups commissioned a legal analysis of the proposed Act to determine its possible effect on agriculture. A summary of the analysis and suggested improvements is available to producers upon request (call 403-275-4400). See *Water Conservation* on page 4.

Special Places 2000

The provincial government released a revised Special Places 2000 proposal in March. The committee is concerned about the adverse impact that a Special Places designation could have on Crown grazing leases and neighboring private land. The ACC is working to ensure that decisions are made through scientific analysis and local stakeholder consultation and that grazing is permitted in a revised policy.

Municipal Government Act

The committee is working to have a section of the previous Municipal Government Act included in the new version. The previous act restricted municipalities from assessing business taxes on agricultural operations. However, this section was removed from the new act which could result in a variety of municipal taxation programs. Different taxation levels could affect competitiveness between provincial regions and with trading partners.

Safety Nets

Contrary to the expressed wishes of every major cattle producer organization in Western Canada, the provincial and federal governments seem intent on enrolling the industry in another safety net program. The committee will continue to work with other organizations to convince the government of the trade dangers inherent in safety net programs. For more information about the activities of the provincial affairs committee call Chairman Jim Turner, Cochrane, at (403) 932-5278.

Happy 10th Birthday CAP!

The dedication of hundreds of volunteers over the past 10 years has allowed the Classroom Agriculture Program (CAP) to get stronger each and every year.

This year, in honor of its tenth birthday, CAP has spiced up the program by introducing exciting new artwork, games and activities in the hand-out material.

During Agriculture Week March 6-11, an eager group of 650 volunteers told the story of agriculture to approximately 26,000 grade four students in over 1,100 classrooms throughout the entire province. Both the ministers of agriculture and education have endorsed the Classroom Agriculture Program.

We're Trying Something New With Our Producer Communications. . .

Starting June, the ACC will be inserting **Grass Routes in Alberta Beef** and **Cattleman** magazines. From then on, **Grass Routes** will be published and mailed just two times a year - the Fall Annual Report and the January Policy Report. For those of you who don't receive either magazine and still want to get ACC news at home just fill in this coupon and mail it back to us - we'll send Grass Routes to you by mail.

Alberta Cattle Commission
#216, 6715 - 8th Street NE
Calgary, AB T2E 7H7

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Type of Operation:

Cow/Calf ☐ Yearling ☐ Feedlot ☐

Mixed ☐ Dairy ☐ Other ☐

Water Conservation and Management Act

Problems and Solutions

Ownership of Sloughs and Wetlands

The draft Act potentially expands areas defined as water bodies to include “any location where water flows or is present, whether or not the flow or the presence of water is continuous, intermittent or occurs only during a flood and includes, but is not limited to wetlands”. Section three of the Public Lands Act states that the beds and shores of all permanent and naturally occurring bodies of water belong to the Crown. This potential expropriation of large areas of farmland has serious implications for the legal and tax status of the land. For that reason, the agricultural industry suggests the most reasonable and practical solution to the ownership issue would be to clearly identify those areas considered to be water bodies for the purposes of the Act. Only the beds and shores of water bodies owned by the government would be specifically listed in the regulations. Any small water bodies, sloughs or wetlands not listed in the regulations would be owned by the landowner on whose land they occur.

Proposed solution: *Amend the statutes so that the government would own the beds and shores of only those water bodies that are specifically listed in the regulations.*

Water Rights and Licencing

If applied in its current form, the Act could create serious problems for a large number of producers, especially those with livestock, who would be forced to obtain a licence for any use in excess of two acre feet/annum. These licences would be subject to the terms and conditions applied under the new Act and would be junior to all existing licences. A number of solutions have been proposed including: grandfathering existing uses without a licence, establishing a new category of up to six acre feet on which special licences would be issued, retaining the existing domestic use category, or allocating a basic right of a certain amount of water to each parcel of land or to each livestock operation. The agricultural community is interested in exploring the concept of attaching a basic water right to each parcel

of land, based on traditional use. This basic amount could never be detached from the land. This concept would not only resolve the problem of livestock watering, but would also preclude the potential for land to be left without any water at all as a result of transfers.

Proposed solution: *Explore the impact and feasibility of applying a basic water right to every parcel of land, sufficient to provide water for the uses traditionally made of that land.*

Priority of Rights

A number of producers close to large urban centers expressed concern about the potential for rapidly expanding rural residential developments to deplete existing surface and ground water supplies to the detriment of agricultural activities. This problem is compounded by the proposed priority of rights in the draft Act. Adoption of the concept of a right in water attached to land as proposed above would provide additional protection to agricultural users, but would not prevent neighboring residential developments from drawing on those supplies. It was suggested that there is insufficient provision in the new planning act to require local planning authorities to ensure that existing water uses are protected before allowing new developments, especially residential subdivisions.

Proposed solution: *Seek an amendment to the new planning act that would require local planning authorities to include provisions in their general municipal plan or planning bylaws to ensure that existing agricultural water uses and rights are protected before they allow new residential developments.*

Transferability

The majority of producers have expressed opposition to any form of transfer of water, based on their concerns about treating water as a commodity and the potential for land to be left with no access to water. However, a growing number of producers recognize that in areas where water is limited, we must either allow some form of voluntary transfer or adopt an administered

water management and allocation procedure. The latter would require more stringent conditions on water licences and uses and greater powers for the Environmental Protection department to deal with allocation and shortages. Facing that alternative, producers may be prepared to accept some form of voluntary transfer if; confined to areas where water supplies are limited; that basic access to water is protected for agricultural use and livestock production; and that local stakeholders are able to have input into when and how such transfers are allowed.

Proposed solution: *If transferability is to be allowed under the new legislation, the following conditions will apply:*

- *the right in water attached to land proposed above will not be transferable,*
- *transferability will be limited to those catchments where water supplies are either totally allocated or becoming so,*
- *water management plans are in place, and*
- *the terms and conditions for transfers in any area will be determined by the local stakeholders.*

Protection of Instream Objectives

We are concerned about the emphasis put on instream needs and ecosystem protection in the draft bill. While most farmers support the increased emphasis on conservation in the new legislation, we are opposed to putting instream needs ahead of other important uses. We suggest that the term “needs” be replaced with “objectives” and that such objectives form part of any water management plan for the catchment, and be dealt with along with other important uses in that catchment. In times of shortage, instream objectives should be subject to the same restrictions as other existing allocations.

Proposed solution: *Replace the term “instream needs” with “instream objectives” and deal with such objectives in a water management plan in the same context as other uses and needs. In times of shortage, apply the same restrictions to instream flows as are applied to other important uses.*

BOVINE TRICHOMONIASIS UPDATE

Bovine Trichomoniasis (Trich) has received a great deal of media attention this past year. To date, however, there has been little consistent information about what producers should be doing to protect their herds against the disease. Following is an outline of groups that are at risk from Trichomoniasis as well as recommended testing, vaccination and control procedures.

NO RISK GROUP

- Virgin Bulls
- Virgin Females

NOTE: A virgin animal is defined as an animal that has never penetrated or been penetrated.

LOW RISK GROUP

- Non-virgin bulls with no previous history of being exposed to an infected herd.
- Cows with calf at side and no previous history of being exposed to an infected herd.
- Virgin yearling bulls housed with mature high risk bulls.

HIGH RISK GROUP

- Non-virgin bulls (two years and older) with a previous history of being exposed to an infected herd.
- Open cows and cows without calves at side with previous history of being exposed to an infected herd.

TESTING RECOMMENDATIONS

CATEGORY 1 CLOSED HERDS:

- Testing is NOT recommended for virgin bulls.
- Testing is NOT recommended for mature bulls if they have not been exposed to a known infected herd.

CATEGORY 2 HERDS INTRODUCING NEW BREEDING STOCK (NOT USING COMMUNITY PASTURES):

- Testing of mature bulls prior to the breeding season is left to the discretion of producers in consultation with their local veterinarian.

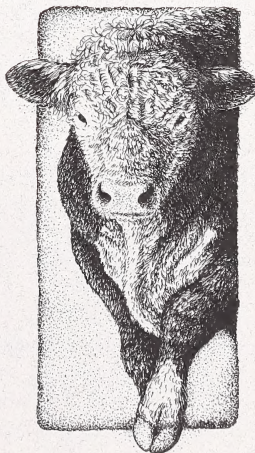
CATEGORY 3 HERDS USING COMMUNITY PASTURES:

- Testing is recommended for mature bulls (two years and older) going to community pastures/assembled herds.
- Testing is recommended for herds with fertility problems.
- Testing is recommended for cattle previously exposed to infected herds.

NOTE: Any positive cultures should be verified and reported to a provincial veterinary lab.

CONTROL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Early pregnancy examinations by a veterinarian are strongly recommended.
- All bulls with confirmed positive cultures should be culled to slaughter to prevent spread of the disease.
- Open and infertile females should be culled from the herd.
- Breeding groups should be separated according to their RISK STATUS.
- ROUTINE vaccination is not recommended at this time although it may aid infected cows in clearing the organism from the reproductive tract. More information has yet to be collected about the prevalence of the disease and the effectiveness of the vaccines available.



Producers are encouraged to contact their local veterinarian for more information on how to best apply these recommendations.





Canadian and U.S. producers discuss border problems

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA), Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC), Cargill Foods and Lakeside Packers/IBP jointly hosted a delegation of key U.S. producers early January to discuss border inspection issues.

ACC Chairman Ben Thorlakson explained our view that inspection at origin and destination promotes product safety - reinspecting at the border does not. If anything, it works against any pathogen reduction strategy by introducing higher temperatures and possible foreign contaminants.

The U.S. producers were impressed with the Canadian inspection system and appreciated seeing the high standards at the packing plants for themselves. By the end of the tour, which also included a visit to Western Feedlots and Theissen Feedlots, both groups

agreed we must work in close cooperation to market a high quality North American product in new markets such as Asia.

At the U.S. National Cattlemen's Association annual meeting two weeks later, negative resolutions concerning trade with Canada from the Montana Stockgrowers Association, Colorado Cattlemen's Association and Washington Cattlemen's Association were withdrawn. Instead, the Canadian industry was defended when a motion from the Colorado Cattle Feeders' Association was presented. That motion was defeated.

Tariff rate quotas unacceptable

Canadian cattle producers are disappointed by the federal government's plan to issue supplemental import permits for Australian and New Zealand beef beyond the tariff rate quota set by GATT. With domestic production of boneless beef up 20 per cent this year, and increased feedlot production of five to six per cent, CCA Foreign Trade Chairman David Andrews argues that importers' claims of a manufacturing beef shortage just don't make sense. The CCA asked the government to delay the decision until research can verify the actual availability of manufacturing beef within NAFTA countries.

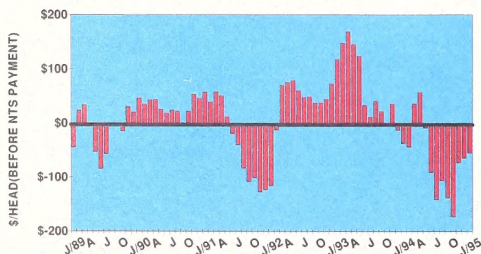
Federal budget reaction

Included in the federal budget is a move towards user fees for grading and inspection services. The CCA is working to ensure the efficient delivery of these services. Adoption of HACCP (hazard analysis at critical control points) principles and technologies that ensure a safe, high quality product are being actively encouraged.

Market Watch by:



ALBERTA FEEDLOT PROFIT/LOSS MARGIN BASED ON YEARLING STEER - JAN/89 - JAN/95



SOURCE: CANFAX

MONTHLY AVERAGES FOR ALBERTA

prices in (\$/cwt)	Feb. average	Jan. average	change	Feb. 94 average	change
FED STEERS	94.06	94.51	-0.45	91.03	+3.03
FED HEIFERS	93.30	94.56	-1.26	90.31	+2.99
FEEDER STEERS					
300 - 400 lbs	137.00	134.28	+2.72	145.56	-8.56
400 - 500	129.92	127.83	+2.09	138.85	-8.93
500 - 600	122.88	120.94	+1.93	131.05	-8.18
600 - 700	112.90	111.68	+1.22	123.02	-10.12
700 - 800	104.25	104.80	-0.55	113.22	-8.97
800 - 900	98.60	100.13	-1.53	105.52	-6.92
900 +	93.85	93.94	-0.09	97.59	-3.74
FEEDER HEIFERS					
300 - 400 lbs	126.19	125.79	+0.40	130.38	-4.19
400 - 500	120.48	119.25	+1.23	127.52	-7.04
500 - 600	113.08	115.29	-2.21	120.55	-7.47
600 - 700	105.34	106.13	-0.79	112.66	-7.32
700 - 800	100.67	99.67	+1.00	106.25	-5.58
800 +	94.14	92.33	+1.81	100.10	-5.96

CANFAX is a non profit market information service that offers its members detailed weekly and monthly market reports and a member-only hotline to get up to the minute information. For more information call Anne or Keith at 275-5110.

ACC Market Information Service

Slaughter Cattle Information 274-4340
Feeder Cattle Information 274-4345

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